

## Gulf of Maine Coastal Program

Building partnerships to protect  
and restore nationally important  
fish and wildlife habitat in the  
Gulf of Maine watershed



*For further information, please contact:*

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Gulf of Maine Coastal Program  
4R Fundy Road  
Falmouth, Maine 04105  
(207) 781-8364  
FAX (207) 781-8369  
fw5es\_gomp@fws.gov  
<http://gulfofmaine.fws.gov>  
Project Leader, Stewart Fefer



**T**he Gulf of Maine Coastal Program, established in 1991 as part of a nationwide network of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Coastal Program offices, works with others to protect and restore nationally important fish and wildlife habitat in the Gulf of Maine watershed. (*See reverse for information on the Gulf of Maine watershed*). Gulf of Maine Program staff offers partners knowledge of habitat concerns in the Gulf of Maine, expertise in conservation biology, ability to assess habitat using geographic information systems, knowledge of habitat protection and restoration techniques, grant preparation skills and experience in outreach and partnership-building. Gulf of Maine Program staff and its many partners help protect and restore the tremendous coastal fish and wildlife resources in the Gulf of Maine watershed.

Working in voluntary cooperative conservation partnerships, the Gulf of Maine Coastal Program has played a key role in:

- permanently protecting more than 115,000 acres of high value fish and wildlife habitat through fee and easement acquisition -- including 48 nesting islands, 118 coastal wetlands and associated upland buffer sites, 16 uplands, and 60 areas adjacent to wild Atlantic salmon rivers,
- protecting fish and wildlife habitat on two landscape-scale forest/wetland easement/acquisition projects totaling over one million acres that preclude residential development and ensure sustainable forestry,
- restoring more than 5,700 acres of habitat for migratory birds -- including 78 coastal wetlands, 6 grasslands, and 12 nesting islands,
- completing 69 river restoration projects to benefit searun fish -- including the removal of 11 dams on rivers and the installation or repair of 14 fish passage facilities at existing dams, and
- leveraging \$54.5 million in federal and \$95.7 million in non-federal funds for habitat protection and restoration.

The Gulf of Maine Coastal Program's habitat protection and restoration initiatives depend on funding and technical support from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, as well as:

### **Other state and federal agencies:**

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service offices in Maine, Natural Resources Conservation Service, National Marine Fisheries Service, Maine Dept. of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, Maine Dept. of Marine Resources, Maine Dept. of Environmental Protection, Maine State Planning Office, Maine Atlantic Salmon Commission and Casco Bay National Estuary Project

### **Non-governmental conservation groups:**

National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Maine Coast Heritage Trust, The Nature Conservancy (Maine Chapter), The Trust for Public Lands, American Rivers, Maine Rivers, Atlantic Salmon Federation -- Maine Council, Project SHARE, Ducks Unlimited, Inc., New England Forestry Foundation, Forest Society of Maine, Restore America's Estuaries, Coastal Conservation Association, Conservation Law Foundation, Trout Unlimited and Maine Corporate Wetland Restoration Partnership

### **Town officials**

**Local land trusts, watershed associations and angling groups**

**Industry representatives**

**Landowners and nearby residents.**

*Contact the Gulf of Maine Program or check our web site for additional fact sheets and detailed information about our activities.*

The Gulf of Maine watershed includes a variety of interconnected habitats -- salt marshes, mudflats, sandy beaches, intertidal and nearshore subtidal zones, islands, rivers, forests and mountains. They all play a vital role in sustaining the natural environment and form the basis of human activity in the region. Estuaries, where fresh river water and salty ocean water mingle, provide productive nurseries for many marine species, vital habitat for diadromous fish, and important feeding grounds for breeding and migrating waterbirds. Salt marshes also produce abundant nutrients through decomposition, provide food and cover for marine and terrestrial animals, and serve as a natural water purification system. Mudflats abound with animal life. Huge concentrations of worms, clams, molluscs and crustaceans survive just below the surface, providing a bounty of food for people and for waterbirds.

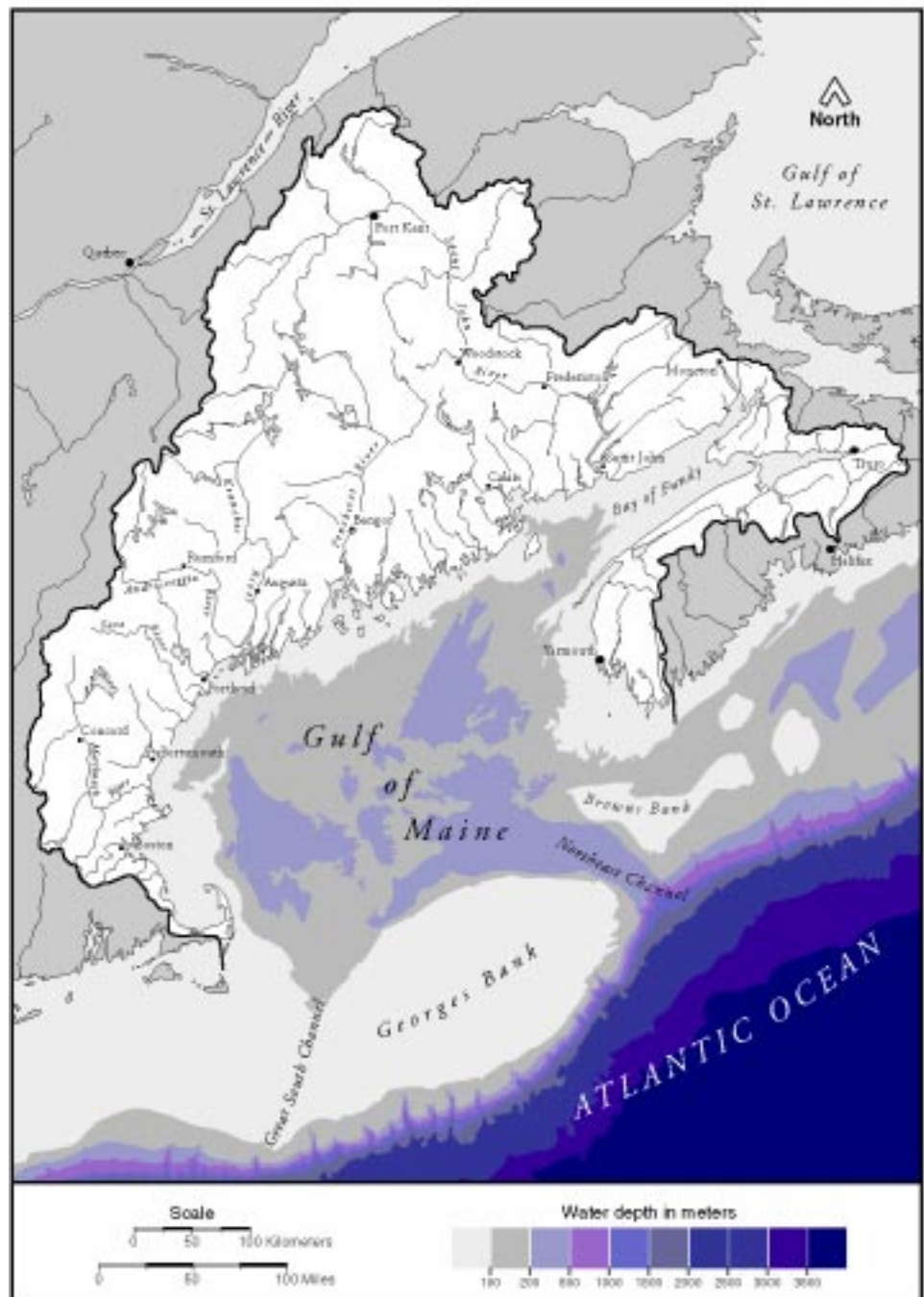
Sandy beaches, rocky intertidal and nearshore subtidal zones and islands play an important role in sustaining the natural environment. Sand beaches provide habitat for two rare bird species -- the least tern and the piping plover. Intertidal and nearshore subtidal habitats support marine algae which provide home for a broad array of organisms, including scallops, flounder, urchins, lobster, and migratory waterbirds. Islands provide critical habitat for seals, seabirds and unique plant communities.

Healthy rivers and their forested surroundings provide wildlife-rich habitat and migratory routes for searun fish, including Atlantic salmon, alewives, shad, American eel, striped bass and other diadromous species.

Cold oxygen-laden waters subject to constant movement, mixing and upwelling create a nutrient-laden Gulf of Maine marine environment -- one of the world's most productive continental shelf communities. Many who live on the shores of the Gulf of Maine appreciate its biological wealth and have nourished themselves from its bounty. However, habitat loss, fragmentation and degradation, wetland and associated upland loss, overharvesting, oil spills, pollution and other cumulative effects of development threaten the integrity of the Gulf ecosystem.



## Gulf of Maine Watershed



## U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) protects and restores fish and wildlife resources and their habitats -- for the natural environment and for us. Nationwide, the Service manages over 500 National Wildlife Refuges dedicated to protecting wildlife. The Service also operates National Fish Hatcheries, raising and stocking about 200 million native fish annually. Through its Ecological Services program, the Service safeguards endangered species, resolves fish and wildlife issues related to hydropower projects, curbs toxic contamination and restores and protects valuable fish and wildlife habitat on public and private lands through partnerships. The Service also investigates cases and enforces federal wildlife laws. Through its Federal Aid program, the Service directs millions of dollars annually to state fish and wildlife agencies for their use in protecting, managing and restoring habitat and providing conservation education.